Application No. 10/567,526
Filed: February 7, 2006
TC Art Unit: 3721
Confirmation No.: 9274

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 5-11 and add new claims 12 and 13 as shown in the Status of the Claims section, *infra*. No new matter has been added. Additions are underlined and deletions are struckthrough. New claims 12 and 13 essentially correspond to allowable claims 10 and 11 re-written in independent form.

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STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Withdrawn) A method for packing tubes which arrive continuously from a production line, and by way of a grouping unit are arranged in groups of tubes lying next to one another with a settable unit number of tubes which corresponds to a layer of tubes to be deposited in a box, wherein the first group of tubes are pushed on a first uppermost row of mandrels which are arranged on a plate-like mandrel support with the dimensions of the clear opening of the box to be filled, whereupon the mandrel support is lifted and is traveled away from the grouping unit, whereupon a next group of tubes is formed, whereupon the mandrel support is again moved to the grouping unit, wherein the tubes which are already pushed on a first mandrel row are lowered by way of the mandrel support to such an extent, that the first row of tubes lies on the newly formed group of tubes, and then this second group of tubes is pushed onto a second mandrel row, and this procedure is repeated, until all mandrels of the mandrel support are occupied with tubes, whereupon the mandrel support is pivoted and moves into an open box and thereupon all tubes are pushed off from all mandrels simultaneously into the box, whereupon the mandrel support travels back to its original position and is ready for the next loading.

2. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 1, wherein one uses two mandrel supports and these are alternately loaded with tubes, wherein in the time in which a loaded mandrel support dispenses the tubes into a box, the second mandrel support is loaded with tubes.

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3. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 1, wherein the mandrels of two adjacent rows of mandrels are arranged on a mandrel support in each case offset by half the diameter of the tubes, and the grouping unit stops in front of the mandrel supports in each case offset by half the distance of the tube diameter in an alternating manner, and the tubes are pushed onto the mandrels of the mandrel support.

4. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 1, wherein a bag-like film lining is inserted into the boxes to be filled, and the edges of this lining are put over the box walls, wherein the mandrel support with the tubes, on insertion of the tubes, pushes the bag-like film lining onto the box base over the whole periphery.

5. (Currently amended) A packing unit for transferring tubes into a container having a clear span, the tubes arriving ~~which arrive~~ continuously from a production line and ~~may be~~ formable ~~formed~~ into groups of tubes lying next to one another in a settable number by way of a grouping unit, ~~into groups of tubes lying next to one another in a settable number, and wherein the packing unit fills the tubes from the grouping unit into a box, wherein~~ the packing unit comprising: ~~comprises~~

a mandrel support having a plurality of mandrels arranged in at least two rows thereon, wherein the mandrel support is essentially a plate, ~~with mandrels arranged in at least two rows thereon, in an arrangement in which the tubes are to be dispensed~~

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~~into a box, and wherein the plate~~ having the dimensions of the clear span of the container~~box~~ to be filled;[[,]] and

~~that~~ a pull-off element ~~is present~~ by way of which the~~all~~ tubes can~~may~~ be simultaneously pushed from the plurality of mandrels into said container.

6. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 5[[1]], wherein each of the plurality of mandrels have the shape of pins which are rectangular in cross section and which are fastened on the plate and whose free ends converge conically in a rounded manner into a blunt tip.

7. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 6, wherein each of the plurality of mandrels in the region with a rectangular cross section are rounded on the longitudinal edges.

8. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 7, wherein each of the plurality of mandrels in the diagonal dimension are designed reducing from the plane end on the plate side, to the free ends.

9. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 5, wherein each of the plurality of mandrels is made ~~are~~ of plastic and comprises~~comprise~~ an axial longitudinal bore whose diameter at the plane end on the fastening side is smaller and serves for accommodating a screw threaded pin, whilst the diameter from the free end is designed larger and for receiving a nut fitting onto the screw threaded pin.

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10. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 5, wherein the pull-off element is a grate of flat ejection rods which running in a parallel manner are in each case arranged between two adjacent rows of mandrels, and wherein the grate can~~may~~ be moved relative to the plate of the mandrel support.

11. (Currently amended) A device according to claim 5, wherein distancers are arranged between ~~in each case two~~ adjacent ejection rods and are held laterally of the mandrel plate on lateral carrier bars~~, wherein the carrier bars~~ resting on a chassis plate, whilst the mandrel plate is displaceable relative to the chassis plate, by which means all tubes can~~may~~ be pushed from the plurality of mandrels simultaneously.

12. (New) A packing unit for transferring tubes into a container having a clear span, the tubes arriving continuously from a production line and formable into groups of tubes lying next to one another in a settable number by way of a grouping unit, the packing unit comprising:

a mandrel support having a plurality of mandrels arranged in at least two rows thereon, wherein the mandrel support is essentially a plate, which corresponds to the dimensions of the clear span of the container to be filled; and

a pull-off element by way of which the tubes can be simultaneously pushed from the plurality of mandrels into said container, wherein the pull-off element is a grate of flat ejection rods structured arranged in parallel between adjacent rows of mandrels, and wherein the grate can be moved relative to the plate of the mandrel support.

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13. (New) A packing unit for transferring tubes into a container having a clear span, the tubes arriving continuously from a production line and formable into groups of tubes lying next to one another in a settable number by way of a grouping unit, the packing unit comprising:

a mandrel support having a plurality of mandrels arranged in at least two rows thereon, wherein the mandrel support is essentially a plate having dimensions that correspond to the clear span of the container to be filled;

a pull-off element by way of which the tubes can be simultaneously pushed from the plurality of mandrels into said container, wherein the pull-off element comprises ejection rods; and

distancers that are structured and arranged between adjacent ejection rods, wherein the distancers are held laterally of the mandrel support plate on lateral carrier bars resting on a chassis plate, whilst the mandrel support plate is displaceable relative to the chassis plate so that the tubes can be pushed from the plurality of mandrels simultaneously.

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